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LABOR IN THE INCORPORATED POLISH PROVINCES
AND THE GENERAL GOVERNMENT

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SUMMARY

1. The general policy of the Germans has been to evacuate Poles from the Incorporated Provinces to the General Government, and to Germanize the Incorporated Provinces. It is estimated that 1.5 million Poles were thus deported ^{Since} ~~until~~ 1940.

2. In that year the rate of deportation began to decline, as the Germans found supplies of labor in the ^{Incorporated Province} ~~General Government~~ insufficient to operate properties.

3. This labor shortage has been aggravated by the deportation to Germany of miners and metal and agricultural workers.

4. The labor needs of the principal industries in the Incorporated Provinces are estimated at 165,000 workers; this does not include large numbers of agricultural and transport workers who are also required.

5. In the General Government, on the other hand, there is widespread unemployment. Some attempts to utilize these Poles have been made through the labor organization, the Baudienst, but the results have been meagre.

6. Wages and working conditions both in the Incorporated Provinces and in the General Government

are desperately inadequate; for German workers, however, they are the same as inside Germany.

7. Strict government control of labor has been instituted in the Incorporated Provinces, and numerous decrees issued regarding compulsory registration and allocation of labor.

LABOR IN THE INCORPORATED POLISH PROVINCES AND
GENERAL GOVERNMENT

I. RESETTLEMENT OF THE POPULATION.

After the collapse of Poland and the partition of Polish territory into German and Soviet spheres of influence, some of the Polish territories administered by the Germans were incorporated into the Reich. Two new German provinces were made out of the annexed territory along with the Free City of Danzig; Warthegau covering most of the Polish province of Poznan and part of the Polish province of Lodz, and Danzig--West-Prussia comprising the Free City of Danzig, Polish Pomerania and the remainder of Poznan. Still a third province, Upper Silesia, consists partly of German and partly of former Polish territories. The Ciechanow (Zichenau) district was merged into the province of East Prussia. The rest of German-occupied Poland became a separate administrative territory under the name of "General Government". Since the German acquisition of the territories partitioned to Russia, Eastern Galicia has been included in the General Government and the Bialystok region added to the province of East Prussia.¹

1. The Displacement of Population in Europe, E. M. Kulischer, International Labor Office, Montreal, 1943, pps. 50-51

The Germans intended completely to Germanize the Incorporated Polish Provinces both racially and culturally. A large-scale settlement of Germans was deemed necessary, but it was first necessary to rid the provinces of their own dense Polish population. Poles were therefore expected and Germans settled in their stead.

Thousands of Volksdeutsche and Germans from the Baltic States, Bessarabia, and Germany were moved to properties in the Provinces. Old-established German colonists were repatriated from the General Government, which was designated the settlement area for Poles from the Incorporated Provinces. The Incorporated Provinces were, on the contrary, to become wholly German.

The application of this segregation principle was substantially modified by practical considerations. Actual eviction of the Polish population to the General Government was begun and after the wealthy and upper-class Polish population had been transferred, the owners of small farms and properties were expropriated, sent to the General Government or Germany to work, and their farms given to German colonists from the General Government and Germany. It is estimated that over 1.5 million Poles were deported from the Incorporated Provinces to the General Government since 1940.

II. LABOR SHORTAGES AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Modification of the expulsion policy began in 1942. Expulsion of Polish peasants was first to be stopped, which was followed by cessation of deportations of workers. The decline in deportation and eviction was the result of the inability of the Germans settled on Polish properties to carry on. The properties were for the most part too small to support whole German families. Deportation of large numbers of Jewish skilled workers in accordance with racial policies contributed to a growing labor shortage. The Germans found it impossible to replace the Poles. The German economy needed the most abundant harvest possible from the land; the resettled Germans, however, were unfamiliar with local cultivation methods, and most important, there were no laborers except the Poles either for agriculture or industry.¹ The decisive factor was that the country needed labor which was not provided for in the German colonization scheme and which was at the time needed also in German industry and agriculture.

In addition to the great shortages of labor which exist as a result of the German evacuation program,

1. Ibid, p. 57

vast inroads have been made into the general labor market as a result of the deportations to Germany and the drafting of men of military age into the German armed forces. Thousands of metal workers and miners were sent westward to Germany, as well as far greater numbers of agricultural workers. As a result of both these programs, great agricultural and industrial labor shortages exist in the Incorporated Provinces. Very few German industrial workers were settled in Germany and the planned industrial expansion of the Incorporated Provinces has been hampered by labor shortages. The labor needs of the principal industries in these territories are estimated, as follows:¹

<u>Industry</u>	<u>Number of Workers Needed</u>
Steel	10,000 - 20,000
Iron manufacturing	100,000
Chemicals	10,000
Building	40,000

Also in great demand are interpreters and teachers of all kinds.² The shortage of labor in the Incorporated Provinces is felt not only in agriculture but also in related occupations, such as the fishing industry.³ It is reported that in order to ease the shortage of railway workers, between 35,000 and 40,000 French locomotive engineers, skilled maintenance men, and

1. MEW, 11/28/42, NDZ

2. Ostdeutscher Beobachter, Poznan, 7/2/43.

3. Danziger Vorposten, 9/15/43.

right-of-way workers have been sent to these Provinces.

In the General Government there is widespread unemployment. Hundreds of thousands of residents of this area were transported to Germany in early 1940, but only 10 percent of the population deported from the Incorporated Provinces to the General Government had found employment in trade or industry by late 1942.¹ The remaining million are dependent upon some makeshift means of living, the help of friends, or casual employment. The German authorities limited their responsibility to bare transportation of the expelled Poles to the General Government. After their arrival they were abandoned. Nominally, all Poles in the General Government are subject to compulsory labor service. However, measures to conscript labor in the General Government extend largely to German nationals and Volksdeutsche residing there.²

Some attempt is being made, however, to utilize the large number of unemployed Poles. A report from Cracow outlines the activities of the compulsory labor organization known as the Baudienst, since its institution in 1940. Whereas, in that year only about 10 percent of those liable for service could be conscripted, about 40,000 were with the Baudienst early

1. MEW, P-64, No. 79, 8/19/43

2. MEW, P-64, No. 79, 8/19/43

in 1943 and in the spring of 1943 this number probably rose to 70,000. In general, twenty-year-olds are being called upon. The activities of the Baudienst during the last half of 1942 comprised a total of four million working days of navvying, stone-breaking, etc. It has been found that the best procedure is to form a division of 120 to 180 men as the lowest unit, under a German division leader. On the completion of their service, the Polish workers are placed at the disposal of the Labor Office. Certain enterprises, notably the Ostbahn, prefer to employ those who have gone through the Baudienst.¹

The meagre results of recruiting and conscripting for the Baudienst bear witness to the fact that a large part of the Poles deported to the General Government are, because of age, physical condition, or disposition, unsuitable for utilization by the Germans.

III. WAGES AND WORKING CONDITIONS

The general level of wages and the conditions of work in the Incorporated Polish Provinces, despite the shortage of labor, are extremely unsatisfactory. Wages paid to Poles working both in the Incorporated Provinces and in the General Government remain at the desperately low levels which prevailed in 1939 when

1. WEW, P-64, No. 57, 12/28/43

0.79 zlotys (approximately 19 cents) was the average hourly wage and 29.00 zlotys (approximately \$5.50), the average weekly wage of a Polish industrial worker.¹

The earnings of Poles at present are reported to be from 250 to 450 zlotys (from \$48 to \$94) per month.² This is a result of the sharp increase in hours of work imposed by the Germans,³ and the wages black market which somewhat raises wage rates in trades where labor scarcities exist. No increase in official wage rates has taken place. It is reported also that no Pole no matter what his job or duties, is permitted to earn more than 450 zlotys per month. Further than that, Polish workers are prohibited from receiving family and children's allowances. Polish employees must receive the wages of unmarried persons. Social insurance from Poles is prohibited,⁴ and the travel allowance has been fixed at two-thirds of that received by Germans.⁵ "The wage tax for Poles must include the war increase . . . other workers do not have to pay the war-increase."⁶ Real wages continue to decline until at present one day's wages will hardly buy a day's bread.

1. International Labor Review, August 1943, Vol. XLVIII, #2, pp. 265-270.
2. American Mercury, November 1943, O. 532.
3. OSS, SA, 11/16/42, Ac #23812.
4. Innsbrucker Zeitung, 8/28/42.
5. Krakauer Zeitung, 8/21/43.
6. Danziger Vorposten, 7/4/43.

On 22 November 1941, the German Minister of Labor issued an order respecting conditions of employment of German workers employed outside Germany proper, including those working in the General Government of Poland and those in the occupied territories. "Under this order, working conditions and rates of wages in force inside Germany are also to apply to German workers employed beyond the frontiers."¹

Accordingly, hourly wage scales for Germans working in both the Incorporated Provinces and the General Government are approximately as follows:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Reichsmarks</u>	<u>Dollars</u>
Male--		
Skilled.....	.80	.32
Unskilled.....	.64	.26
Female--		
Unskilled.....	.44	.18
All male and female.....	.69	.28

Assuming a 50-hour week, German labor earns theoretically anywhere from 22.00 RM to 40.00 RM per week (\$8.80 to \$16.50). Actual wages are probably much higher due to the black market which exists in wages in order to evade the 1939 wage-freeze, which was intended to hold wages in Germany at 1939 levels. In addition, German workers in both territories receive family and children's allowances and social-assistance

1. Reichsarbeitsblatt, 1941, #34, Part I, p. 525; 1942, No. 7, Part I, p. 97.

pensions.¹ Moreover, under the same Ministry of Labor Order of 22 November 1941, "bonuses are provided to cover the higher cost of living in foreign countries or occupied territories. A special trustee has been appointed by the Minister of Labor to be responsible . . . for supervising enforcement of the new order and dealing with all questions arising from employment of German Nationals abroad."²

IV. OFFICIAL ATTEMPTS TO MEET LABOR SHORTAGES

The efforts of the German administration to deal with the shortages of labor in the Incorporated Provinces have taken several forms. On 22 August 1942, Dr. Fritz Sauckel, German General Controller of Labor, issued an order laying down the general rules to be observed with regard to allocation of labor and employment standards in the occupied territories. The order fixes the order of priority to be observed in allocating the available labor to employment in such a way as to ensure that the needs of the German authorities and economy will be met first. These needs are classified for the purpose into five categories: (a) military and civilian occupation authorities, (b) firms producing arms for Germany, (c) agriculture and food industries, (d) goods for German population, and (e) goods for

1. Innsbrucker Zeitung, 8/28/42.-Krakauer Zeitung, 8/21/43.
2. Reichsarbeitsblatt, 1941 #34, Part I, p. 525; 1942, No. 7, Part I, p. 97.

population of occupied territories. Non-German workers in the territories must produce as much as German workers. Hours will be the same as in Germany and not less than 54 per week. If need be, non-German workers must work on Sunday and holidays in the same way as German workers. Workers who, owing to the extension of hours of work, are found to be superfluous in one locality, must be placed at the disposal of the employment authorities in another locality.¹

In early 1943, the President of the Provincial Labor Office of Danzig--West-Prussia issued instructions for the compulsory registration of men and woman. Service is obligatory not only for those unwilling to work, but also those who were formerly independent or were combed out of industry and not yet assigned other jobs. To ensure a supply of workers for agriculture the following instructions were issued: (a) All workers drawn from agriculture by the Labor Office since Autumn 1942 must return at the harvest time, (b) All agricultural workers otherwise employed who can be replaced by women must return to agriculture, (c) All Polish small-farmers' families must register for work on a suitable larger German estate, (d) For the busy season in agriculture (hoeing, pulling out, and digging of root-crops

1. Reichsarbeitsblatt, 10/5/42, Part I, p. 382.

and potatoes) all Polish children between the ages of ten and fourteen without exception must report to the Land Office of placement. The regulation makes further provision for the use of German children in the case of extreme emergency.¹ However, at the same time the German Ministry of Labor announced that German regulations for the protection of juvenile workers do not apply to Polish youth.²

In the Wartheland, also, young people between ten and fourteen were asked to register for the coming harvest.³ Each of these regulations provides heavy penalties for anyone who fails to register.

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1. Danziger Vorposten, 2/19/43.
 2. Ostdeutscher Beobachter, 7/27/43.
 3. Ostdeutscher Beobachter, 7/27/43.